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# DO 670 United Methodist Theology

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DO 670

## United Methodist Theology

January 2005

### Getting Ready for the Intensive

When you come to class on Thursday, January 13 make sure you have done **Four** things:

- a. Read *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* and written the 1-page response paper (see IV. B. 1. Below for details) which is due on Thursday, January 13).
- b. Read *Waking from Doctrinal Amnesia* and written the 1-page response paper (see IV.B.2 below for details) which is due on Friday, January 14.
- c. Read Part II (“Doctrinal Standards and our Theological Task”) of the 2000 or 2004 United Methodist ***Discipline***. **Bring your *Discipline* to class with you on Thursday and Friday, January 13-14.**
- d. Read *Straight and Narrow* and started to write the 1-page response paper (see IV.B.3 below for details) which is due on Tuesday, January 18.

**I Purpose:** The course seeks to introduce students to the content and development of Methodist Theology from the time of Wesley to the present. Following an assessment of the current state of Methodist Theology as it is reflected in the 1972 and 1988 Doctrinal Statements and current theological issues such as God-language, baptism, and homosexuality which United Methodists are wrestling with, we will move back to Wesley to determine the character of Methodist theology, and then forward through Methodist history to show how its character is reflected in its major movements and principal figures. We will also consider the possibility of theological and spiritual renewal within Methodism.

**II. Objectives:** By the end of this course students will:

A. Understand the current state of Methodist theology and some of the major theological issues United Methodists are wrestling with today.

- B. Be able to identify the major figures and themes in the development of Methodist theology since Wesley.
- C. Have examined, evaluated, and used a reasonable range of literature relating to the study of Methodist theology.
- D. Be able to better understand and dialogue with United Methodists adhering to various theological viewpoints.

### III. Textbooks:

William Abraham, *Waking from Doctrinal Amnesia*

Ted Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*

Thomas Langford, *Practical Divinity*, vol 1.

Thomas Schmidt, *Straight and Narrow: Compassion and Clarity in the Homosexuality Debate*

*By Water and the Spirit* (to be distributed in class)

Stephen Seamands, *Holiness of Heart and Life* (on Electronic Reserve)

### IV. Requirements:

- A. Regular **ATTENDANCE** and active participation in class sessions.
- B. Four 250-word (1 page doublespaced typed) **RESPONSE PAPERS**.
  1. The first response paper will be based on your reading of *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* and will be **due on Thursday**, the first day of class. In your response answer the following question: What did I learn about historic Methodist doctrine from reading this text?
  2. The second response paper will be based on your reading of *Waking from Doctrinal Amnesia* and will be **due on Friday**, the second day of class. In your response answer the following question: What did I learn about the current state of UM theology from reading this text?
  3. The third response paper will be based on your reading of *Straight and Narrow* and will be **due on Tuesday**, the third day of class. In your response answer the following question: What did you find most helpful or illuminating about the author's discussion of the issue of homosexuality?
  4. The fourth response paper will be based on your reading of *Holiness of Heart and Life*

will be **due on Thursday**, the last day of class. In your response answer the following question: What aspect(s) of the author's formula for renewal do you believe are most crucial for United Methodists today?

C. One 750-word (3 page doublespaced typed) **RESPONSE PAPER**.

This response paper will be based on your reading of *Practical Divinity, Vol 1*. and 100 pages of collateral reading from *Practical Divinity, Vol 2*. or *Wesleyan Theology: A Sourcebook* (This book which is on reserve in the library consists of primary source material written by the theologians discussed in *Practical Divinity, vol 1*. . Choose any 100 pages from this text *except* the pages of material from Wesley's writings. Turn in a collateral reading report with your response paper to indicate which pages you read. This response paper is **due on Wednesday**, the fourth day of class. In your response to these materials answer the following questions:

- a. What did I learn about Methodism's theological tradition from reading these materials?
- b. What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of our tradition?
- c. Which theologian (exclusive of John Wesley) did you find most interesting? Why?

D. A final take-home **ESSAY EXAM** to be distributed on the first day of class and returned one week after the final day of class (Jan 27).

## V. Course Outline:

A. The Current State of UM Theology : A Brief History of Methodist Doctrinal Standards. The 1972 and 1988 Doctrinal Statements.

B. Current Theological Issues United Methodists are Wrestling With: God-language; Baptism, Homosexuality.

C. Wesley's Theological Legacy.

D. Two 19th Century Movements in Methodism: The Holiness Movement & the Social Gospel Movement

E. Theological and Spiritual Renewal in Methodism